

Application No. 09/264,432
Amendment "F" dated June 1, 2004
Reply to Office Action mailed March 1, 2004

REMARKS

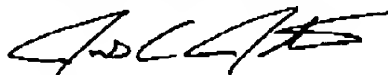
The Office Action mailed March 1, 2004, considered claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 14, 15, 19, 33-42 and 44-48. All of the pending claims, except claim 45, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over various cited references, including Brown (U.S. Patent No. 5,887,133), Perlman (WO 98/56128), Ballard (U.S. Patent No. 6,182,050), Eldering (U.S. Patent No. 6,457,010 and Bedard (U.S. Patent No. 5,801,747)¹. Claim 45 was objected to as depending on a rejected base claim, but was otherwise found allowable.

By this paper, claim 45 has been cancelled and independent claim 44 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 45. Claim 34, the only other independent claim at issue, also includes all of the limitations of claim 44, and hence objected to claim 45.² Accordingly, the only independent claims at issue, claims 34 and 44 should now be found in condition for prompt allowance. Each of the remaining claims depends on claim 34 or 44 and should also, therefore, be found in condition for prompt allowance.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 1 day of June 2004.

Respectfully submitted,



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¹ Although the prior art status of the cited art is not being challenged at this time, Applicants reserve the right to challenge the prior art status of the cited art at any appropriate time, should it arise. Accordingly, any arguments and amendments made herein should not be construed as acquiescing to any prior art status of the cited art.

² Independent claim 1 was cancelled along with dependent claim 45, such that claims 1, 4-5, 7-8 14-15, 19, 33-42, 44 and 46-48 now remain pending, of which claims 34 and 44 are the only independent claims at issue.